

suggestion that he is not even aware of information on subjects he deals with. He writes, for example, that there is no statistical evidence on the use of the various grounds for divorce during the Revolution (p. 128, n. 88). It is true that there are no (and probably never will be) national statistics available, but by 1976 statistics for Metz, Rouen, Nancy and Toulouse were in print, and these might surely have been cited as exemplary. There are other problems of a less serious, but still irritating, nature. The author's syntax fails badly at times, and translations out of French are sometimes very awkward: for example, "le Sieur Lhomme" becomes "the gentleman Lhomme", and "la Dame Sardin" is rendered as "the lady Sardin" (p. 151).

But these are relatively minor criticisms. The fundamental weakness of the book is its failure to link its intellectual and legal history with the social development of eighteenth-century France. This failure leaves the study, which is generally very sound in its limited scope, profoundly unsatisfactory in explanatory and analytical terms.

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M. HENKEL and R. TAUBERT. — *Maschinenstürmer: Ein Kapitel aus der Sozialgeschichte des technischen Fortschritts*. Frankfurt a/M.: Syndikat, 1979. Pp. 263.

A critical attack on others working in the same academic area is justified only if the critic has a new perspective or novel information or if he can demonstrate that the previous authors have not done their work well. Henkel and Taubert provide a very critical attack upon their fellow historians and they seem to have a solid basis for their claims. They note how historians of labour movements have written about events and workers so as to fit them into some schematic approach.

Henkel and Taubert make it their task to illustrate how many labour historians have misread or even falsified labour history and workers' motives in their concern to fit information with their preconceptions on the purpose and nature of labour organizations and ideology. They take the German machine breaking in Eupen of 1821 and Solingen of 1826 as cases in point to illustrate that both East German Marxist and West German authors operate with an eschatological outlook which forces them to mould events to their perspectives.

With the reconstruction of a piece of the everyday we want to denounce that historical writing which demotes the worker by a metaphysical construction of the so-called labour movement; an historical writing which praises or attacks workers to the degree in which they meet the demands which historians impose upon them. (p. 9) (All translations are by the reviewer.)

This declaration of war is carried out in an irreverent but highly relevant study.

Henkel and Taubert begin their astute and insightful dissection with a clear analysis of representative Marxist and Social Democratic authors who have their eye trained to look for the emergence of an organized labour movement in the 1830s. They illustrate that the Marxists' assumptions about technological progress made them see the machine breakers as misguided and still partly uninformed hand-

workers, who had only attained a primitive state of consciousness and did not understand their proper role. This sharp-witted review of authors is accompanied by satirical comments in parentheses. A similar approach is used on a selection of West German authors who keep asserting that the craft tradition hindered the development of the labour movement or that the machine breakers stood in the way of progress. In sum Henkel and Taubert illustrate that almost all previous historians see the machine breakers in a sympathetic manner but as "reactionary". What Henkel and Taubert seek to point out with their sarcastic approach is that it is necessary "to shake out of one's head that the people at the beginning of industrial capitalism knew that they stood at the beginning of industrial capitalism" (p. 21). Only if that is accepted can the basic fallacy of the historians who see the machine breakers as the preventers or precursors of the transformation of the world, from feudalism to capitalism, from craftsmen to organized labourers, be studied somewhat objectively. In rejecting their German colleagues' approach Henkel and Taubert side with Eric Hobsbawm's conclusion that machine breaking was one of the few effective forms which workers had of placing pressure on employers and they thereby set up a series of hypotheses on how labour history might be approached.

In the detailed analysis of the Eupen and Solingen events Henkel and Taubert basically substantiate their attacks upon other historians even though they take the work of Dieter Dowe too much as their whipping boy. Henkel's and Taubert's method of citing original texts almost in full as well as a very thorough accounting of the social situation of each town and local economy lend themselves well to their attack. In the Eupen case they demonstrate that the mill owners were not serving some vague idea of progress but sought only as ineffective entrepreneurs to survive a competitive situation. They also show that the state generally served as a brake against innovations but would side with the manufacturers introducing new machinery in order to maintain law and order. Certainly, they show that the Eupen workers had their own consciousness and not the beginnings of consciousness related to a later labour movement. They point out that class consciousness and class actions were widespread well before the nineteenth century or well before the 1830s which historians of German labour have usually identified as the beginnings of the labour movement. Henkel and Taubert demonstrate that it is wrong to dismiss the spontaneous actions of these workers as "primitive", "wild", "half-organized" and that the craftsmen's efforts and actions were not backward looking but were typical class actions. They maintain that even the clashes of the eighteenth century were not so different than those of workers and capitalists today and that "the machine breakers of the nineteenth century could look back upon a century of experience" in class struggles (p. 101). Certainly these historians will make many labour historians wonder whether the usual pattern of a *Standesgefühl* (feelings on status) developing into a *Solidaritätsbewusstsein* (consciousness of solidarity) can be dated from the 1830s to the 1860s.

In some ways this study is another nail in the coffin of Whig history but since the version of Whig history they attack refuses to settle into that coffin it is a very significant nail. Their work, with all its overassertiveness, is necessary in a world where historical views are official or semi-official since almost all German labour historians work in some state or party-supported institute and since much effort is expended by the Marxist and the Social Democratic authors defending their respective schemata one against the other. Since these authors write in a clear German style they perform another act not often found among their compatriots by making history easy and enjoyable to read.

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